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THE CITY IN HISTORY.

IN every system of social philosophy from Aristotle to Spencer the relation of city growth to national progress has occupied an important place. While the diversity of interpretation becomes less marked with the more recent writers, we are still far from a consensus of opinion.

The interest of the philosophers, as of the people of ancient Greece and Rome, was centered in the city. Beyond its limits life was stunted and incomplete. With the simpler concept of life which ushered in the Middle Ages a reaction against the conventionality and artificiality of city life makes itself felt. The city is looked upon as the center of vice and crime rather than as the focus of the elevating and ennobling pleasures. "Return to nature," which is the cry of the eighteenth century as well as of the sixth, expresses the revolt against the excesses to which the temptations of city life had led. Not until the changes accompanying the industrial revolution had demonstrated that economic progress and city growth were connected as cause and effect, do we find a marked change of attitude. With the evolutionary philosophy of the present century the city is again given a position of importance among the factors of advancing civilization.

If we turn from the interpretation of philosophers to the facts of historical development, it is evident that concentration of

population is a primary requisite to advancing civilization. The temptations and dangers which city growth involves are dangers incident to progress. That nations have succumbed to such temptations is merely an illustration of the fact that every change in the conditions of life brings with it a new strain upon national character requiring increased self-control and discrimination.

Throughout the history of civilization we can readily trace the close relation between the aggregation of population and the development of the arts and sciences. The close association of city life first makes possible the division of labor, and with such division of labor comes increased productive power. Every advance in productive power creates new wants and involves new possibilities of enjoyment. In all the earlier civilizations menial duties were performed by slaves, which set free the energy necessary to supply the wealthy and leisure classes with comforts and luxuries. The possibility of leisure, which becomes a reality through the division of labor, opens new avenues of intellectual development. We speak of the country as the best place for meditation and reflection, but constantly lose sight of the fact that it is "the crowd, the hum, the shock of men" that sharpens the intellect, develops inventive genius, stirs commercial activity, and arouses the spirit of coöperation.

The primary incentive to intellectual advance comes from the city. For the mass of the population a constant stimulus is necessary to assure even a small amount of intellectual activity, for left to himself the individual rapidly sinks to the intellectual stagnation characteristic of isolated rural districts. The constant contact of mind with mind, which can only be obtained in the city, is necessary to any general intellectual advance. The social life of our modern cities clearly shows that in the great majority of cases the incentive to intellectual effort comes from without; the desire to imitate some person or group of persons who have acquired a commanding position in the social circle to which they belong. It is only within recent years that we have come to appreciate the full importance of this principle of imitation in progressive as well as in regressive evolution. The growth of custom is but one of its applications. Bagehot was the first

clearly to perceive the far-reaching importance of this factor in making possible concerted action and in establishing social order.¹ But custom presupposes the close association of a considerable number of persons, whether it be the primitive family or the more highly organized modern community.

The limitations of a civilization devoid of cities is well illustrated in the history of the early Aryans, of which Ihering² has given us a masterly analysis. Their slow advance was due to the peculiar economic conditions, which were distinctly unfavorable to city growth. A people of shepherds cannot found cities; their occupation is inconsistent with the close aggregation of population necessary to city life. The fact that the parent stock of the Indo-Europeans did not even reach the agricultural stage explains their inability to advance beyond the village as the highest form of social organization. Even as late as the time of Tacitus the Teutons had not advanced to the city stage. Ihering truly says that no progressive people that has once made this tremendous stride toward a higher civilization would take the step backward to a lower type of organization. The word "city" is unknown to the Sanscrit tongue. Its nearest equivalent—*vastu*—means "abode, domicile, place of habitation." Furthermore, each of the Indo-Germanic tongues has a different term for "city," which goes to show that the phenomenon of urban growth was subsequent to the splitting of the parent stock into separate nations.

We are apt to underrate the importance of the transition from the village to the city economy. It constitutes the last, the most important, and, to the minds of many, the final step in the progress of civilization. In all the nations of western Europe the city represents the highest type of social organization. The nature of the forces determining this transition from the village to the city economy has been the subject of endless dispute among historians. According to one school, led by Fustel de Coulanges,³ the closer association necessary to the

¹ *Physics and Politics*, chap. v.

² IHERING, *Evolution of the Aryan*.

³ FUSTEL DE COULANGES, *The Ancient City*, English edition, p. 167.

development of city life was made possible through the adoption of a common religion. Community of religious worship constituted the basic civic bond. "The tribes that united to form a city never failed to light a sacred fire and to adopt a common religion." Another and more recent interpretation is that advanced by Ihering.¹ According to this view the city was originally the fortified place which served as a refuge for the surrounding agricultural population in periods of danger.

From our present knowledge of the conditions of life in primitive communities, it is evident that the latter explanation strikes closer to the root of the problem. Community of religious worship was the result of certain definite economic and social needs; a necessity incident to the closer coöperation which city life demands. While common religious ties accompanied the founding of the city, it is not the cause to which the aggregation of population is to be ascribed.

The early history of the Semites furnishes abundant testimony—most of which is cited by Ihering—that the fortified center always accompanied increasing density of population, and that in a great many instances it was within the walls of the fortified inclosure that the city first developed. Just as the towns of the tenth and eleventh centuries grouped themselves under the protection of some fortified castle, so the cities of the early Semites were nothing more than walled inclosures to which men, women, and children fled, and in which household goods were stored and cattle collected at the signal of an approaching foe. From a mere place of refuge this walled inclosure gradually became a place of residence; at first for a few artisans, then for those whose estates were nearest the fortifications.

It required many centuries to make fully apparent the radical changes which this new form of association was destined to work in the conditions of national life and thought. The fundamental political ideas upon which modern governmental organization rests, the characteristic features of our economic activity, the higher standards of social intercourse which distinguish modern from primitive society—all rest upon conditions for

¹ *Evolution of the Aryan* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1898).

the development of which the growth of the city was a prerequisite.

The idea of territorial attachment, which is at the root of our modern idea of patriotism, was greatly strengthened by the influence of city life. It is true that the origin of the idea is to be found in the changes incident to the transition from the pastoral to the agricultural stage. We are prone to forget, however, that one of the most important factors in the development of agriculture was proximity to the city. Until the new market possibilities are developed the amount of labor expended upon the soil is comparatively small, and the attachment to any particular locality is correspondingly weak.¹ Strong territorial ties are largely dependent upon "the memory of long and hard struggles, upon the consciousness of effort expended in the past and willingness to make further sacrifice in the future." No such feeling seems to have moved the early agriculturists. With the city, however, an entirely new basis for the development of economic and social relations was offered. In the purely agricultural stage each household was sufficient unto itself; everything necessary to the daily routine of life was manufactured in the home. Division of labor between different groups of occupations was unknown. With the certainty of a ready market comes the possibility of specialization in trade and industry; relatively complex relations of service and counter-service are soon developed, which strengthen the territorial tie. The city soon comes to mean the territorial unit within which the activity of the artisan has its limits, as well as the center of social amusement for the well-to-do landed proprietor. Thus the new economic relations, combined with the social pleasures which never fail to arise when population becomes dense, give a new meaning to the idea of residence. Citizenship, with the feeling of loyalty and attachment to the territory itself, becomes a reality. It is important to note that the feeling of attachment is no longer limited to the property owned by the individual, as is the case in the agricultural stage. The whole territory of the city, as the center of new economic opportunities

¹ See IHERING, *Evolution of the Aryan*.

and the theater of social pleasures, becomes the "home" of the individual. He is no longer the inhabitant of a small piece of ground, but the resident of the city—in short, a "citizen."

Another important result of this development of economic and social relations is the influence upon social manners and customs. Language has here recorded the accumulated experience of the race with great accuracy. The Latin *homo rusticus* and *homo urbanus*, which indicate the contrast between the city- and country-bred, were also used to describe the difference between the boorish, the unrefined, the vulgar and the cultured, the polished, the courteous. The influence of city life upon the individual took some time to make itself felt in the cities of the earliest historic time. The principle of social imitation already referred to shows itself with peculiar force in the growth of the customs, forms, and ceremonials which constitute the outward signs of the refining of social relations. The great landowners, who were as a rule the heads of the oldest families of the town—those who were regarded as the founders of the city—were the first to develop the more refined forms of social intercourse. They were at the same time the political leaders, a fact which gave to all their actions additional prestige and authority. To appreciate the influence of such leaders we need but glance at the conditions of social life in modern society. Each class—in fact, every social set within each class—has its leaders, those who set the standards of social intercourse. The constant search for "*the thing to do*," the uncertainty as to whether a particular form is correct until sanctioned by a social leader, is one of the most interesting illustrations of the law of social imitation. The attempt of each class to imitate the forms of social intercourse of that just above it often appears to be one of the great weaknesses of human nature. Viewed from the sociological standpoint, however, it is one of the great forces making for progress. Its influence as a unifying force extends far beyond the limits of the city. Social classes in different cities are constantly taking from one another new standards of conduct and intercourse. This is particularly true of the relation of the capital city to provincial towns. Thus in ancient times the customs of the

Athenian citizens were copied throughout Greece ; the patricians of Rome were the models to the ruling classes in other cities of Italy ; just as today the man of leisure of Lyons apes the manners of the *boulevardier* of Paris. The more polished manners of the wealthy and leisure classes gradually filter down from stratum to stratum. With each class the form of intercourse is modified, until some traces of it are to be found even in the lower classes. Babylon, Athens, Rome, Constantinople, each in turn served as model for the provincial towns, in much the same way as Paris, Berlin, and London serve at the present time.

With these primary results of city growth in mind we can readily appreciate the significance of city life in the history of civilization. It creates new economic activities, new political ideas and ideals, new forms of social intercourse, new possibilities of interchange of ideas. Discussion, the contact of mind with mind through which the general level of intelligence is raised, becomes one of the prominent factors in the political life, first of a class, then of the whole people. A constant and ready audience is furnished to the orator, the poet, and the philosopher. Although it required centuries to develop all these possibilities, they were in process of formation from the time the inclosing walls of the first cities were built.

THE CITIES OF GREECE.

The records of Greek civilization begin and end with its cities ; no other nation has so completely concentrated its life and thought upon the perfecting of city life. To the Greek mind the history of the race begins with the founding of the city. The facts of historical development are made to harmonize with this view by means of a kind of social-compact theory according to which primitive tribes were brought together by some supernatural power, and as the result of their union the city was formed. Though this explanation of the origin of the city may lack foundation in fact, it is interesting as an indication of the dominant position occupied by the city in the thought of the time. This early form of the social-compact theory was used at

a later period to explain the origin of Rome and of the other cities of Italy.

The rise of Athens furnishes one of the best instances of the influence of environmental conditions upon urban growth. The city is situated in the center of a plain surrounded by mountains on all sides except to the south, where it approaches the sea. This protected position offered a resting place for the more advanced clans and tribes, especially those who were prepared for the settled pursuits of agriculture. The introduction of the olive, which requires great care and attention, served to strengthen the attachment to the soil and thus assure a relatively stable population.

In the immediate vicinity of Athens, furthermore, the greatest variety of soil and climate was to be found.¹ Within a comparatively short radius of the Acropolis the grape, the olive, and the staple agricultural products were raised with comparatively little difficulty. Mineral resources of considerable importance were within easy reach, clay pottery offered employment to a large number, while close proximity to the sea opened the seafaring careers to the population. Another important element in the situation of Athens was the abundance of water due to the proximity of the mountain ranges. The early deification of these springs and the important position ascribed to the water nymphs, such as Agrauleon, Nysa, and Krene, are indications of an early appreciation of the necessity of husbanding these resources with the greatest care. The fact that the early settlement of the native tribes was not made immediately on the seacoast is not surprising when we bear in mind the constant exposure to inroads of marauding pirates which such situation involves. In ancient times the seacoast was the haunt of robber bands rather than a place for permanent settlement.

With the combination of physical and economic conditions described above, the rapid growth of Athens is readily explained. In fact, the country districts of Greece never developed a distinctive life of their own. Citizenship itself meant membership in the body corporate of some one of the "city-states." Not

¹ Cf. CURTIUS, *Stadtgeschichte von Athen*, Berlin, 1891.

only was everything planned to meet the demands of the city, but the soil itself was owned by persons living within the city walls. Agriculture was carried on by slaves, and the produce sent to the city. To be compelled to live in the country was a mark of social degradation. Citizenship of Athens was the goal of civic ambition.

We have some difficulty at the present time in picturing to ourselves the conditions resulting from the complete absorption by the city of all the political and social interests of the community. At a time when political, social, and religious institutions were still undifferentiated, when the city concentrated within itself the ties which today are scattered over an ever-increasing area and among an indefinite number of institutions, it is not surprising that an intensity of city life was developed which has not been again attained. For this reason the social and civic life of the cities of Greece is of far greater interest to us than the form of governmental organization and administration.

The identity of state and municipality makes comparisons with modern conditions misleading rather than helpful. Athens seems to have lacked the nice coördination of authority which characterizes our modern system.¹ During the early history of the city-states kinship seems to have been the guiding principle in administrative organization, which accounts for the growth of an aristocracy of birth monopolizing public office. Coincident with the increase of the privileged class we find the first clear differentiation of governmental functions. The king was first induced to delegate certain of his powers to his immediate advisers, which marked the first step in the transition from the early "king-priest" form of government, in which all power, civil and ecclesiastical, was vested in one person, to the aristocratic and oligarchic system. Those whom the king called in as advisers soon came to regard their office as a proprietary right. A narrow aristocracy of magistrates was thus formed, which in Athens absorbed all political power and gradually degenerated into an oligarchy of the worst type. Most of the other cities of Greece went through the same stages of development.

¹ BOECKH, *Staatshaushalt der Athener*.

The transition to democracy in Athens was preceded by important economic changes which completely altered the class relations within the community. The primary cause of these changes was the increasing industrial importance and consequent social power of the artisan class. This class arose in response to the higher and more refined wants of the governing and wealthy classes. Selected at first from among the dependents, because of special aptitudes as handicraftsmen, they gradually acquired social privileges which became more important as their clientage became wider. The imitation of the fashion set by the social leaders of Athens aroused a constantly increasing demand for the better class of products. Economic independence brought with it gradual social emancipation. It required long years of struggle before this condition of fact was recognized in law. The inherent contradiction between legal and social relations was a fruitful source of discontent and a constant menace to the peace and safety of the community. The drastic legislation of Solon sought to reestablish harmony between law and fact. The first step was to give those who had acquired economic independence the right to participate in the political life of the community. To make civic emancipation complete all outstanding debts on land and person were abolished. The entry of a relatively large class of former serfs and slaves into the political life of the community led to the formation of the first popular assembly. From this time until the Athenian democracy reached the height of its development we have a series of assemblies comprising an ever-increasing percentage of the population. The best authorities seem to agree, however, that at no time did the citizen body exceed one-tenth of the total population of 200,000. To this general assembly of citizens all important questions were submitted. A standing committee or council of five hundred, elected from the larger body, was intrusted with the general administration of public affairs. That Athens was able to make this rapid extension of rights without bringing about political anarchy represents her most important contribution to the development of political institutions.

The ideals which dominated the period are so different from our own as to make the contrast suggestive and profitable. In Athens, as in most of the cities of the ancient world, the individual was completely subordinated to the community. His welfare had no existence independent of the welfare of the city as a whole. The Greeks could not conceive of an opposition of interest between the individual and the group, or, if such opposition did arise, there was no question as to which should prevail. Ideas of imprescriptible, inalienable rights were foreign to Greek thought until the time of the Stoics. Adjustment of individual activity to the harmony of communal life seems to have been the guiding principle of social conduct. The contrast between the splendor and attractiveness of social life and the relative crudity of family life is difficult for us to grasp at the present time. This is largely due to the fact that in modern communities the welfare of the family rather than that of the community commands the best energies of the individual. With us the common, inclusive pleasures of communal life play a very small part compared with the intense pleasures of home life. In the cities of Greece, however, these public pleasures strengthened the feeling of local attachment which found expression in an inexhaustible local patriotism.

ROME AND THE CITIES OF ITALY.

The fact that the conditions of soil, climate, and immediate physical environment were less favorable to Rome than to Athens was far outweighed by the commanding position of the former in the Italian peninsula and its more favorable geographical relation to the other countries of the Mediterranean basin. Although the plain of Latium—of which Rome occupied the strategic position—did not offer the variety of soil and climate of the central plain of Attica, it was sufficiently fertile to attract and furnish support for a large population. With the Sabine mountains to the east, the Volscian to the south, the hill lands of Etruria to the north, and the sea to the west, its position combined to a remarkable degree security with accessibility to other portions of Italy, Europe, and Africa. The desire to protect

themselves from the attacks of pirates, which led the early settlers of Athens to remain at a distance of some five miles from the sea, was equally powerful in the case of Rome. At a distance of some fourteen miles from the mouth of the Tiber the series of surrounding hills furnished a readily defensible position most favorable to permanent settlement.

The founding of the city has been lost in a mass of legend and tradition. It is quite certain, however, that a number of separate tribal settlements existed on the several hills long before the formation of a unified city. The division of the city into wards, known as *tribus rusticæ*, long after such unity had been attained, is conclusive evidence of the nature of the constituent factors in the formation of the city. The explanation now generally accepted is that the necessities of common defense forced the tribes into closer relationship, which ultimately developed into political unity. The first organization of the *populus romanus* is in the three tribes—the Ramnes, the Tities, and the Luceres—which were probably the original tribal settlements.

The cities of ancient Italy, while lacking the charm of high artistic development which characterized some of the cities of Greece, mark a distinct advance when viewed from a political standpoint. The Greek concept of restricted city territory was ill-adapted to the larger view of political relations developed by the Romans. Furthermore, the growth of a world-empire made it necessary to give a broader interpretation of citizenship. Roman citizenship was conferred upon the leading citizens of conquered districts, even when situated at great distance from the city. This intangible political relation marked a long step toward the idea of nationality. Of all the cities of the Italian peninsula of this period Rome is the only one which commands our attention because of its enormous influence upon western civilization, the magnitude of the municipal problems with which it had to deal, and the striking analogies with modern urban growth. In her history one can detect the presence of most of the forces which explain the increase of urban population in recent times. In advancing beyond the "city-state" and developing the idea of

world-empire she created the conditions requisite for the growth of large centers of population. The extension of political influence to distant countries led to the development of an elaborate administrative system having its center in Rome. The conquered countries, instead of being reduced to a condition of complete subjection, were permitted a large measure of local self-government. Political centralization brought with it well-developed means of communication between province and capital, and a system of police protection to life and property. Thus freedom of migration was for the first time made possible and resulted in the influx of the country population into the cities. The economic opportunities offered by a city of the size of Rome, combined with the fascination of the spectacular display of court life, proved irresistible to the most energetic and capable of the inhabitants of the rural districts. The constant tension of interest and excitement which the city offered made poverty seem more desirable than comparative ease in the rural districts. The metropolis was open to every new idea and eagerly welcomed every invention and discovery. Men of science, philosophers, and poets, all sought the audience of Rome.

With all these influences at work it is not surprising that the population soon approached the million mark. Owing to the absence of a census the exact number is not known, the estimates varying from one and a half to two millions. The best authorities place it at about 800,000.¹ There is abundant evidence that when this point was reached all the phenomena of overcrowding made their appearance. While the walls of the city embraced a comparatively large territory and were being continually moved farther from the original limits, the lack of means of transportation led to the concentration of population in the central districts. Everyone wished to be near the center of social life and amusement. The *clientes* had to be at the door of the patron early in the day and were unwilling to take the risk of a long journey from the peripheral or suburban districts. A degree of overcrowding resulted with which no modern city offers a parallel.

¹ Cf. BELOCH, *Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1886).

Hundreds and thousands were crowded into cellar dwellings. The narrow streets, characteristic of all the ancient Italian cities, added to the difficulties of the situation. In Rome we can clearly see the relation of the standard of life of a people to the question of overcrowding. It is true that most of our modern cities contain districts far more densely populated than any quarter of Rome, but, owing to the low standard of life of the poorer classes and the lack of effective sanitary supervision, the resulting conditions in Rome were far worse. Fortunately, the habits of the people led them to spend the greater portion of their time in the streets, which counteracted, in part at least, the unwholesome effects of the conditions of habitation. This love of street life, which contrasts so strongly with the conditions in the American cities of today, led to the congestion of the thoroughfares to such a degree that Cæsar found it necessary to issue a decree prohibiting the passage of wagons through the central districts during the ten hours after sunrise. The strict enforcement of this regulation was made imperative by the great number of traders' booths that were erected along the sidewalks. Not until the time of Augustus was any systematic attempt made to regulate the building of dwelling houses. Their height was then limited to seven stories, and some elementary sanitary requirements prescribed.

It is curious, and at first sight rather surprising, that the municipality of Rome—and the same is true of all the ancient cities—while neglecting the regulation of private sanitation, gave considerable attention to everything connected with public convenience and comfort. Great public baths, a magnificent water supply and splendid public places were provided with a munificence which has not since been equaled. By such means the emperors gained the support of the masses. To make way for such public improvements whole sections of the city were torn down, thus increasing the congestion in adjacent districts.

In short, the municipal activity of Rome was directed mainly toward the development of the social amusements of the city. The regulation of individual health and welfare was largely lost sight of. In modern times the tendency seems to be in exactly

the opposite direction. The great—and probably the only—lesson which Rome has to teach modern municipalities, *quâ* municipalities, is the importance of the rôle of the public authority in providing healthful recreation for the citizens. Our strong individualistic instincts have led us to develop only those sides of municipal activity that contribute directly to individual welfare; we are still far from accepting the idea of the social rôle of the municipality. It is clear to every student of our industrial and social conditions that we must sooner or later give due weight to this more positive view of governmental power. In the readjustment which is gradually being effected the experience of the ancient cities will be of considerable value.

CITIES OF THE MIDDLE AGES.¹

With the breaking up of the Roman empire, Europe enters upon a period of disintegration which finds expression in the most extreme forms of political decentralization. The feudal system, while containing the germs of city growth, did not permit of the free movement of population necessary to the growth of large centers. Settlement was dependent upon the will of the feudal lord. The earliest towns grouped themselves around the feudal castles, mainly to enjoy the protection afforded by the fortifications, while others owe their origin to special market privileges granted by the feudal lords. To one or the other of these two causes, or to both combined, the growth of the mediæval towns may be traced. None of the early towns could boast of more than a few thousand inhabitants—hardly larger than a modern village; in fact the largest English borough of the thirteenth century contained but five thousand inhabitants.² At the beginning of the fifteenth century London itself had a population of but forty thousand. The three primary requisites for city growth were lacking:

1. A large territory from which to draw population.

¹See ASHLEY, *End of the Middle Ages*; MRS. J. R. GREEN, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*; JASTROW, *Die Entstehung der deutschen Stadtgemeinde*, Düsseldorf, 1889.

²MRS. J. R. GREEN, *op. cit.*

2. An advanced state of commercial and industrial development offering opportunity for remunerative employment to large numbers.

3. A strongly centralized government guaranteeing freedom of migration from district to district, thus permitting the city to exercise its full powers of attraction upon the country population.

The absence of these conditions brings the social life, the economic activity, and the position of the mediæval city in the loosely coördinated political system of the time into striking contrast with modern municipal institutions.

We have become so accustomed to regard the city as an administrative subdivision of the state, enjoying certain subordinate powers of government, that we have great difficulty in picturing to ourselves the town life of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. The greatest differences relate to the activity rather than to the form of city government. The mediæval town was primarily an economic unit, the modern city is mainly a political and administrative division. A study of the town life of the Middle Ages leaves the impression that we have to do with great commercial corporations, exploiting special economic privileges. The monopoly of market rights, the power of regulating trades and industries, the complete control over every economic activity, all rights wrested from the temporal or ecclesiastical feudal lord, are the most important factors in the development of town institutions. Those who participated in the struggle for these privileges share equally in their enjoyment. When we stop to consider that all our modern ideas of political and civil rights, patriotism, and national allegiance were as yet undeveloped, it is not at all surprising that the early burghers looked upon the town as a complex of economic privileges, and that the town life of the period should receive its character from this principle. The exploitation of the tangible property and of the intangible rights of the town is the key to the institutions of the period.

The main problems with which the mediæval towns had to deal were connected with the exploitation of these property

rights. Not until late in their history was any attempt made to develop the distinctive municipal services with which we associate the modern city. No public water supply, no public drainage or lighting system, no sanitary regulations; in a word, nothing to remind us of the purely public or governmental side of the city's activity. On the other hand, innumerable regulations concerning trade and industry, prescribing with great minuteness every detail in the industrial activity of the individual, seem to have occupied the attention of the local authorities. Those who were fortunate enough to be parties to the original privileges were naturally anxious to assure exclusive enjoyment to themselves and to their posterity. Active participation in the benefits of these privileges was the mark of citizenship; strangers were admitted as a matter of grace. The idea of political rights was the product of a much later period. The city authorities not merely regulated, but were the leading spirits in the trade and commerce of the town. In many cases the city had the first option on all goods offered for sale. A curious trait of the policy of the mediæval towns was the strong desire to protect the consumer as against the exactions of the producer. The price, time, and place of sale were fixed for every class of goods. The few foreign merchants who were permitted entry into the city markets were carefully watched, the supervision of the public authority often extending to the assignment of their dwelling place.

The contrast between mediæval and modern citizenship is readily explained when we keep in mind that the former carried with it certain specific economic advantages, quite as definite as membership in the modern business corporation. It is no wonder, therefore, that citizenship became a marketable, inheritable property right. In some cases it could be acquired by ownership of land within the limits of the town or by serving an apprenticeship in one of the trades under guild regulation. But in every case the extension of citizenship was under the control of the town authorities. The usual methods of acquiring full membership in the community were, first, through inheritance; second, through gift from the municipality; third, through purchase.

The desire of the citizen body to retain the exclusive enjoyment of the town privileges explains the form of government of the mediæval towns. It is but natural that those who had participated in the early struggles with the feudal lords should participate in the advantages accruing from the results of the conflict. In the early history of many of the towns the market rights furnished the economic basis for city growth. Equal participation in these advantages and political equality went hand in hand. The democratic movement of the Middle Ages was checked as soon as the original settlers or their descendants had established the rule of exclusive enjoyment. After the twelfth century distinct traces of a nascent oligarchy are to be seen, which became well marked at the beginning of the fourteenth. "The English borough in its first condition, and probably during a considerable part of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, realized the ideal of a true democratic community."¹ The forces that undermined the early democracy were twofold—first, the denial of equal economic opportunity to newcomers, which led to their political subordination; second, the social ascendancy of the more prosperous trades, which gave to certain classes the leadership in political affairs.

The first of these requires but little explanation, as the monopoly of economic and political privileges which the founders of the towns had secured for themselves was inherently inconsistent with the principles of democracy.

The second is closely connected with the growth of the guilds which were, at first, conglomerate associations of employers and employés—the organization of producers as against consumers. Within each guild, rank was determined by individual skill and efficiency; inherited privileges were unknown. Democracy within the guild continued to exist long after democracy in town government had disappeared. The intimate relation between the guilds and the town government, which developed very gradually, was due to the fact that the main function of the public authority was to guard the economic privileges of the town and to further its industrial

¹ MRS. J. R. GREEN, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*.

prosperity. Constant consultation with, and in fact the active coöperation of the trade organizations was necessary to the efficient performance of this function. It is but natural that they should be called upon for advice in the solution of purely commercial questions, in much the same way as municipal authorities call upon chambers of commerce at the present time. In the mediæval city, moreover, municipal functions were almost exclusively concerned with questions of trade, commerce, and industry. With organizations so well equipped to deal with commercial questions as were the guilds, it was only a question of time when their advisory power would develop into real authority over this branch of municipal activity. The absorption of the most important public functions by the trade organizations gave them a strength of political power which resulted in the subservience of all other public authorities to their will. This shifting of public power completely changed the character of the city government.

The consciousness of acquired power reacted upon the guilds, transforming them into aristocratic associations of the most pronounced type. The temptation to use this power to secure a monopolistic control over the trade and industry of the city was irresistible. Membership in one of the guilds was made a necessary prerequisite to the exercise of a trade. Thus a twofold incentive to withhold membership from newcomers was created: first, to prevent the overcrowding of trades; and, secondly, to maintain the high value of guild membership. Thus the same economic forces which in the early history of the mediæval towns were instrumental in creating a democratic society became destructive of this form as soon as the desire to retain exclusive possession of market and trade privileges began to show itself.

It was not long before the guild aristocracy degenerated into an oligarchy, due in part to exceptional power enjoyed by the leaders of the guilds, but mainly to the decreasing interest in town affairs incident to the expansion of commercial relations. As is the case with all associations of this character, the affairs of the guilds were carried on by a comparatively small number

of officials who naturally enjoyed the political power connected with their position. Thus a small fraction of the total guild membership became the real rulers of the town.

That this assumption of power aroused no great opposition is due to the fact that at the time when it took place the economic and political interests of the citizen were beginning to extend beyond the limits of the town. At the close of the fourteenth century the English towns had reached the height of independent development. "With the ages of restless growth lying behind them, and with their societies as yet untouched by the influence of the Renaissance or the Reformation or the new commercial system, the boroughs had reached their prosperous maturity."¹ During the succeeding century England passed through her first industrial revolution. From a cloth-importing she became a cloth-exporting country. The establishment of commercial relations with foreign countries carried the interest of the citizen beyond the territorial limits of municipal control. The spirit of independence and assertive individualism thus created reacted unfavorably upon local institutions, while local ties, being largely economic, were weakened with the disappearance of economic dependence upon the community. As soon as the citizen began to appreciate the possibilities of individual activity independent of the coöperation and sanction of the public authority, the vigor and intensity of town life began to decline.

With the fifteenth century we enter upon a period of political development which was destined to destroy the importance of the town as a political unit, reducing it to the condition of a subordinate administrative subdivision of the state. The growth of national life proved fatal to town independence in England, as well as on the continent. In England, however, the period of local autonomy was considerably lengthened by the failure of the feudal lords to extend their political power at the expense of the crown. Before reaching national unity the countries of continental Europe passed through a period of territorial integration, in which the small but independent sovereignties were in a state of constant conflict with the towns.

¹ MRS. J. R. GREEN, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*.

In France, on the other hand, the necessities of war developed a strong central government as early as the twelfth century, cutting short the period of municipal independence. In England the centralizing policy of Henry VIII. and Wolsey demanded the subordination of the towns to the purposes of the king. The crown saw clearly that independence of local policy develops political ties and political ideas inherently antagonistic to a strongly centralized system. The necessity of obtaining control over the towns was made imperative by the desire of the king to maintain his supremacy in parliament through the manipulation of the borough representation. In order to assure himself of the support of this important element of parliamentary representation, a system of returning members was devised, to which the peculiar development of borough government lent ready aid. As the concentration of municipal authority in the hands of a few guild representatives became more pronounced, it became the custom, in adjusting inter-municipal relations, to identify these individuals with the municipality. The corporate concept, which was just making its appearance in the English law—having been first applied to ecclesiastical and eleemosynary institutions—furnished a ready means of effecting the purpose of the crown. The essence of the corporate idea is the legal personification of a collection of individuals. If, by any means, the crown could make its own nominees the corporate body, there would be no difficulty in controlling the parliamentary representation of the borough. This was done by issuing writs of *quo warranto* and substituting for the charters forfeited under this proceeding a form of organization in which those constituting the corporate body (*i. e.*, the returning parliamentary organ) were specifically named.

Such proceedings would have aroused a storm of opposition, even revolution, at an earlier period, when the citizen body was in closer touch with municipal powers and prerogatives. As we have already had occasion to point out, the growing industrial independence had greatly weakened local ties. With the exception of the larger cities, such as London, little opposition was encountered. The people were too much absorbed in exploiting the new commercial and industrial opportunities to

pay much attention to changes in the mechanism of local government. Furthermore, the increasing importance of national affairs was absorbing the political energies of the people. Thus a change, which at first glance would seem to violate the fundamental political principles of a liberty-loving people was effected without violence, and almost without opposition.

In granting the new charters the crown appointed the members of the corporation, giving to these appointees power to fill all vacancies. Thus the community as a body of citizens and the borough as a corporation became distinct entities. Under such conditions it is not surprising that the civic life of the boroughs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries possesses little of interest to the student of local institutions. Town life does not again offer a fruitful field of investigation until the appearance of the new urban centers, which owe their rise to the industrial changes of the end of the eighteenth century.

THE MODERN CITY.

With the breaking up of the mediæval system of independent town units we enter upon a period of political development in which the city is given a position fundamentally different from that which it occupied during previous periods. The change was one that affected not merely the relation between city and state, but also profoundly influenced the attitude of the population toward the city and its government. With the Reformation period the transformation of political ideas and ideals becomes distinctly apparent; a movement which was hastened by the radical changes in territorial relations throughout Europe.

In the cities of the ancient and mediæval world the individual in all his personal and property interests was subordinated to the community. The *communitates* occupied first place in the political thinking of the time; political ideals were grouped about the city. Individual welfare was, in fact, so closely bound up with the city's activity that this interpretation of the relation of the individual to the community was not only logical but necessary. Every relation of trade, industry, or commerce was dependent upon the public authority. In fact, in the mediæval towns, as

we have had occasion to see, membership in the political community was a necessary prerequisite to the exercise of any trade or calling.

The new and distinctly modern spirit first asserts itself in an intense individualism which completely changed the concept of government. The idea of the individual as an end, rather than as a means, begins to dominate the political thinking of the time. England of the seventeenth century gives clear evidence of the influence of the new political principles. The rôle of government, which in the mediæval cities had been construed to include the regulation of every field of individual activity, receives a new and distinctly negative interpretation. Ideas of inherent and imprescriptible individual right obtain general acceptance, while government is regarded as the guarantor and protector of these rights rather than as a positive factor in industrial activity. The settlement of America gives to these ideas a new and wider environment in which to develop. There they receive definite formulation in law. The bills of rights and the prohibitions upon government of the early compacts are dominated by a spirit of individualism which has been fostered by the industrial evolution of the present century. In a country of unexploited resources the opportunities for individual initiative and enterprise are so great that a feeling of independence toward government inevitably arises.

Due, in large part, to the combination of these forces, the negative view of government, which limits the public authority to the protection of individual rights, received its fullest development in the United States. It has met with no such counter-acting political forces as has been the case in England. Not only the conditions of economic growth, but also the character of our political life, has fostered these individualistic tendencies. The political issues which the present generation has had to face have made prominent individual rather than national interests. The manufacturer desires a tariff to increase his profits; the workingman, to raise his wages; the debtor advocates a silver standard; the creditor, a gold standard. In none of these questions have the interests of the nation, as such, been made prominent.

It is taken for granted that public and individual interests are essentially identical.

That this attitude toward government has strongly influenced the civic life of our cities is evident to every observer of American political conditions. To one section of the community the city government is a necessary evil designed to avoid the greater evil which would result from the clash of individual interests. To another it is akin to a great business corporation, justifying the use of the ordinary standards of commercial morality in obtaining favors and privileges. No civic or social duty is violated if franchises are obtained by questionable methods ; transactions of this character being judged by the prevailing standards of business life. If the municipal authorities are unable to safeguard the city's interests, they deserve to be outclassed in the commercial struggle as would any incompetent business-man. The city's interests are rarely, if ever, identified with those of the public, and in taking advantage of incompetent or corrupt officials there is no thought of depriving the public of rights to which it is entitled.

Another important influence in strengthening this negative attitude toward the city is closely connected with one of the strongest traits of American national character—the high development of the domestic virtues and the resulting intensity of home life. While no one can deny the great service which these qualities have rendered to our national life, we must recognize that upon our civic life their influence has been distinctly negative. The concentration of effort upon the exclusive pleasures of the home has retarded the growth of the distinctive civic ideals. The feeling of social solidarity and civic responsibility, so necessary to the maintenance of high standards in public life, has remained undeveloped. Administrative efficiency has only been attained in those departments—such as the police and fire service—which directly affect the safety and integrity of the home.

In European cities, on the other hand, the branches of the public service which contribute most to the public, inclusive, and social pleasures have received the most attention. The street-cleaning, highway construction, and architectural services

of Paris furnish a striking illustration of this principle. In the life of the French capital the outdoor pleasures play a most important part, pleasures which to a very large degree are dependent upon the degree of care given to the streets. As a result, the failure to maintain high standards is immediately felt by the population and arouses violent opposition. In our American cities the streets are regarded as means of communication and nothing more, and the mass of the population remains satisfied so long as such communication is made easy and rapid. Not that the mass of the population does not desire clean streets. But the fact that dirty streets do not arouse resentment sufficiently strong to give rise to positive action makes such opinion as does exist ineffectual. Standards of efficiency in government are determined by the dislikes rather than the desires of the population.

From this analysis it is evident that the problem of city government is one which involves more than the question of governmental organization or reorganization. Its successful solution requires, not merely the most efficient administrative machinery, but such a change in the life and thought of the people as will bring an increasing number of city services into organic, vital relation with the daily life, the pleasures and recreations of the population.

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